

# Salt and Serenity

## Maple Pecan Brown Butter Tarts

Make 18 tarts

The pastry recipe is slightly adapted from Chef Michael Smith's pie dough from his book, "Back to Basics". The filling recipe comes from my friend Harold, who has a farm with a million maple trees and produces gallons and gallons of maple syrup every spring.

### Pastry

2-½ cups all-purpose flour  
½ cup whole-wheat flour  
1 cup granulated sugar  
½ teaspoon kosher salt  
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, frozen  
½ cup ice water

### Filling

1 1/2 cups packed brown sugar  
1 cup pure maple syrup  
4 eggs  
2 Tablespoons cider vinegar  
1 teaspoon kosher salt

2/3 cup unsalted butter

3/4 cup pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped  
3/4-cup raisins (optional)

1. Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 400°F. Set out 2 muffin tin with 12 cups. Use a regular sized muffin tin, not mini or jumbo. Lightly grease 18 of the muffin cups. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl whisk together the all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, sugar, and salt. Grate in the frozen butter using the large holes of a standard box grater. When you have about an inch of butter left, stop grating and just chop the remaining piece of butter into small pieces with a knife. Otherwise you will grate your knuckles.
3. Working quickly, toss the flour and butter shards together with your fingers until the fat is evenly distributed throughout the flour. This will ensure flaky pastry.

4. Sprinkle in the ice water then stir into a dough mass with the handle of a wooden spoon. There will still be lots of loose bits of flour at this point. It's okay. Transfer dough onto the counter and, working quickly, so the heat of your hands does not melt the butter, knead a few more times, just to bring everything together.
5. Divide dough in half and place one half in the fridge, lightly wrapped in plastic wrap. Roll out the first half between 2 sheets of parchment paper, to about a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in thickness. Using a 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch round cutter (a large coffee tin or small pot lid works well for this), cut out as many rounds as you can. Form a pleat along one side and fit the pastry into the lightly greased muffin tins. Repeat with remaining dough, and if you still do not have 18 rounds, roll out the scraps and use them as well. Chill the lined tins while preparing the filling.
6. Whisk brown sugar, maple syrup, eggs, cider vinegar and salt together in a medium sized bowl, until smooth. Set aside.
7. Cook butter in a small heavy saucepan over medium heat until deep nutty brown (careful not to burn), about 4-6 minutes. Use a light coloured bottom saucepan to gauge the colour of the butter. Stay at the stove while browning the butter. It can go from brown to black in the blink of an eye.
8. Immediately pour browned butter into a glass-measuring cup to stop the cooking process. Gradually whisk the browned butter into the sugar-egg mixture. Whisk until well blended.
9. Divide pecans and raisins evenly among pastry shells. Spoon scant  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup filling into each shell.
10. Bake the tarts for 10 minutes at 400° F, and then reduce the oven temperature to 375° F and bake for an additional 10-15 minutes, until the filling is bubbling and the crust edges have browned. Cool the tarts in the tin and after about 5 minutes, carefully twist them around in the pan to prevent sticking and keep them in the pan until completely cooled.
11. The butter tarts should be stored refrigerated but are best served at room temperature. The tarts can be stored chilled for up to 3 days.

